

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP

September 27, 2000 MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

Review of August 23 meeting notes

The August 23, 2000 CALFED Ops meeting notes were not available by the beginning of the meeting. DWR will ensure that notes for the previous meeting are available at least a week before the next scheduled meeting. Comments from the August 23 and September 27 notes will be discussed at the October 25 meeting.

Announcements

Lowell Ploss is now Deputy Regional Director over Reclamation's Regional Office, Division Office, and Mid-Pacific Construction Office. In the interim, Chet Bowling will be the acting Manager of the Central Valley Operations and the Co-Chair of the CALFED Operations Group. The Central Valley Operations office reports to deputy Regional Director Kirk Rodgers.

The following handouts were provided at the meeting:

1. SWP Operations Package, September 27, 2000, DWR, John Leahigh
2. Environmental Water Account Package, DWR, Leo Winternitz
3. Fall/Winter Juvenile Salmon Decision Process (Oct 1 – Mar 31), September 21, 2000, USFWS, Marty Kjelson
4. Juvenile Chinook Monitoring from October 1, 2000 through March 31, 2000, draft September 27, 2000, ESO, Sheila Greene
5. Draft Intensive Study Plan for the Delta Cross Channel, EPA, Bruce Herbold
6. Winter-run Chinook Salmon, Steelhead, and Spring-run Chinook Update, September 27, 2000, Bruce Oppenheim

Environmental Water Account Implementation

Leo Winternitz is the interim CALFED EWA coordinator. His handout provides definitions of EWA, a table of asset acquisitions, a summary of EWA activities, and the status of EWA acquisitions. There are 5 State and federal agencies that are responsible for implementing the EWA. The Managing Agencies, which includes DFG, USFWS, and NMFS, are to determine how EWA assets are to be used. The Project Agencies, DWR and USBR, are to acquire the EWA assets and implement the actions requested by the Managing Agencies and covered by their EWA assets.

SWRCB

The Merced Irrigation District petitioned the SWRCB to make temporary changes to their water right license. The proposed change would add the Banks Pumping Plant as a temporary point of diversion, and add the wildlife refuges in the San Joaquin Valley that are supported by the CVPIA as a temporary place of use under the right. The petition was noticed to the public on August 25, 2000 and objections were received from PG&E, South Delta Water Agency and the San Joaquin County Farm Bureau Federation. The issues raised are substantially the same as those raised by SDWA during Phase 2 of the Bay-Delta Water Rights Hearing.

SWRCB staff has nearly completed an internal review draft of the Yuba River Water Right Decision. A decision could be adopted in November or December, if the Board does not require substantial revisions.

Two water rights hearings are scheduled for October 2000. The Delta Wetlands Hearing will resume on October 10 and continue for three days, if necessary. On October 16, there will be a hearing to consider petitions for change in Place of Use and Purpose of Use for water right permits held by the Oroville-Wyandotte Irrigation District and the Yuba County Water District. Copies of the hearing notices may be obtained at <http://www.waterrights.ca.gov/hearings/>.

At the August 23 CALFED Ops meeting, there was a report on Term 91 compliance activities in the Delta and elsewhere. At that meeting, it was also reported that SWRCB staff were investigating other apparent irregularities in the Delta. On August 21 and September 12, 2000, the SWRCB sent letters to the Woods Irrigation Company requesting specific information on amount and timing of diversions, a description of the place of use and proof of the basis in right under which diversions have been made. The company is located on Middle Roberts Island and serves approximately 6,300 acres. The company was formed in 1909 as a mutual water company, and claims to be serving individual shareholders under their respective riparian rights.

A notice was sent to parties on the Bay-Delta Service List on September 12, 2000, acknowledging DWR Director Hannigan's report on negotiations to resolve issues in Phase 8 of the Bay-Delta Water Rights Hearing. The notice also advised that the SWRCB intends to issue a notice in December specifying dates for resumption of the hearing. The first dates are anticipated to be in March 2001.

Juvenile Salmon Protection Plan

The DAT is developing a successor to the Spring-run Protection Plan to protect all races of juvenile salmon emigrating in the October through March period. A chart was presented at the Ops Group meeting detailing the process to trigger actions or

make specific recommendations. Accompanying text for the chart is being drafted and will be finalized by the DAT and made available for the next CALFED Ops Group meeting.

The DAT also presented information on monitoring activities that are part of the Fall/Winter Juvenile Salmon Decision Process.

OFF and DAT Update

The DAT is working on the Juvenile Salmon Protection Plan.

Delta Cross Channel and Through Delta Facility

CALFED and CVPIA are funding a series of experiments designed to study the effects of Delta Cross Channel operations on salmon migration and water quality. Beginning September 5, the proposed DCC operations are to open the gates for 3 weeks, then to open the gates tidally for 3 weeks, and finally to close the gates for 3 weeks. Also scheduled are 2 weeks for fish studies. The USGS will be measuring flows at the Delta Cross Channel, the Mokelumne River, and Georgiana Slough in conjunction with these studies. A handout detailing the draft intensive study plan for the Delta Cross Channel was presented.

OPERATIONS

CVP/SWP Operations Status:

The current State and Federal reservoir levels and export rates were presented as per the SWP Operations Package handout. Keswick releases are expected to drop to about 5,000 cfs around mid-October. Also in October, Feather River releases will drop below 2,500 cfs. Delta outflow should be about 3,500 to 4,000 cfs next week; the October monthly average is expected to be just over 4,000 cfs. CVP and SWP pumping will continue at or near full capacity through October.

The period for diverting the additional 500 cfs ended September 27 because DWR planned to begin breaching the barrier in Grantline Canal the following day. A total of about 33,000 acre-feet of water was moved from Oroville storage into San Luis Reservoir as a result of the additional pumping. To accomplish this, the SWP had to release about 54,000 acre-feet of from Oroville.

On September 20, the State inadvertently diverted more water than allowed by the additional 500 cfs permit, causing the 3-day average inflow to Clifton Court Forebay to exceed 7,180 cfs. Inflow to the forebay was adjusted on September 21 to bring

the 3-day average below the allowable by an amount equal to the exceedence. A letter explaining the events has been sent to the USACE. On September 20 and 21, the D-1641 standard for allowable percent of inflow that may be diverted was exceeded. A letter was sent to the State Water Resources Control Board explaining the events. Copies of these letters will be forwarded to the Operations and Fisheries Forum (formerly the No Name Group).

Temporary Barriers

The Grantline barrier will be breached September 28 and completely removed by October 1. The other two agricultural barriers will also be breached and removed by October 1. Installation of a barrier at the head of Old River Barrier will be delayed about one week. This year, the HOR fall barrier will have culverts installed to help alleviate downstream water level problems. As designed, the barrier should be able to withstand flows over 4,500 cfs. However, permit conditions with the local Reclamation District will require that the barrier be breached if flows approach 4,500 cfs. Currently, DOI is planning to acquire water on the Merced River and have it released as part of an attraction flow. The resulting pulse will cause the San Joaquin River flow to increase to about 4,000 cfs.

South Delta Dredging

South Delta dredging began September 10. Unfortunately, with only about half of the dredging window remaining, the project is only 25% complete. The slow progress can be attributed to unexpected material in the channel. Additional dredging equipment may be required or a one-month extension may be requested in the South Delta Mendota area to allow dredging to continue beyond October 14.

Fishery Status

Salmon: NMFS provided a handout detailing the status of winter-run chinook salmon, steelhead and spring-run chinook. It was reported that the Salmon Genetics Project Work Team is working on a white paper comparing estimated take of genetically characterized winter-run salmon and winter-run length criteria salmon. The Genetics PWT also has agreed that estimates of winter-run loss based on genetics information could be reported along with the traditional method of estimating loss.

Splittail: USFWS will look into the need for interested parties to resubmit earlier comments on Splittail listing for use in determining the scientific justification for the listing of Splittail.

Delta Smelt: Nothing to report.

Agenda items for Next Meeting . . . October 25, 2000

EWA will be presented on a regular basis.

Status of the Fall Midwater Trawl

Weather Prediction by Bill Mork (if there is room on the yet-to-be-decided agenda)